TRUE RELIGION IN THE OLD WAY OF Piety and Charity.

DELIVERED

In a SERMON to the Lord Major and Court of Aldermen of this City of *London*, at their Anniversary Meeting on Munday (commonly called Easter-Munday) at the Spittle, 1645.

By ROBERT HARRIS B D. Pastor of *Hanwell*, *Oxon*. and a Member of the Assembly of Divines

JAM. 1. 26, 27.

If any man among you seeme to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue,——this mans Religion is vaine.

Pure Religion——is this, to visit the Fatherlesse and Widowes in their affliction, and to keep himselfe unspotted from the World.

LONDON,

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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
THE LORD MAJOR
and Court of Aldermen, with other
Citizens of the renowned City of
LONDON.

THE *Accompt that I make of my* ſelfe *and* ſervice *is this: For my* ſelfe, *the reaſon of my ſlowneſſe in this work grew not from any undervaluing of your ſo honourable invitation, but from mine owne diſtemper of body, which at the ſame time forced me to deprecate a* greater ſervice *to a greater* Aſſembly, *and to lay aſide this till it was too late to put it off. 2. For the* works *ſelfe,* 1. *in my* choyce, I *had reſpect to cuſtome and entreaty, and in the* purſuance *of that* choyce *I lookt upon*

Jubet qui rogat, &c. Obligant qui impetrant, &c.

the ſeaſon and Auditory: You have now by your motion (that is) command, *made it publique, and it being your* owne, *it is in your power to make it good: That is a good Sermon which doth good, as that's good ſoyle which mends the ground: that good food or Phyſick that* helps *the body: Some worth you have put upon it in your* calling *for it, and ſending it* ready written *to my hand; if now you pleaſe to tranſlate it into* practice, *the work is done. And ſurely there lyes before you the faireſt of opportunities; never was there a fitter ſeeds-time for* Prayer *and* Almes; *in the one the pooreſt may concurre, in the other they cannot; that's your happineſſe that you can give, and will be more yours if you* doe *the thing. It was ſome comfort to me to heare (ſo ſoone after my ſervice) of a deſigne for the poor, that* newes *was to me what* Jonahs *Gourd was to him; and my prayer is, that* this *may be more laſting then* that: *The poore are exceeding* many, *and their wants exceeding* great, *and it is not the leaſt of our grieſes, that many of us in the* Miniſtery *can doe no more; we meet them hourly, and part but ſadly; they ſighing becauſe they cannot* receive, *and we becauſe we cannot* give; *and give we cannot*

not, til we receive better anſwers then we do from more then enow: We know you not, we cannot, we will not, we may not ſupport ſuch a — *I am not (I confeſſe) well read in your Charter, I know not your* bounds; *this I know, that this* famous *City hath been heretofore much honoured and bleſſed both* by *and* for *their* Miniſters; *this I know, that Magiſtrates by calling are* Heirs of reſtraint, *and that ſinne uncontrold and unpuniſhed by them, will be ſet upon their* heads, *and beaten upon their* backs; *Yea, and this I have read, that where viſion (preaching) failes, the people are naked, or (ſay ſome) idle and uſeleſſe; that where men grow* high *in* ſin *and* ſcorne, *the City is enſnared or fired,* Pro. 29.8. *that where any City is divided, it cannot ſtand,* Mat. 12.25. *This I am ſure of; and therefore my humble ſuit unto you is, that as you tender your* ſelves, *your* ſafety, *your* City, *your* Poſterity, *your* Religion, *your* Chriſt, *your* All, *doe your utmoſt to* reſtraine *all* deſtructive *ways of ſinne, errour, faction, &c. and to eſtabliſh a ſetled* Government, *and ſincere* Religion *among you: Oh! let it not be free for any men at pleaſure to proclaime their* Jubilees, *to aſſert, to preach,*

Judg. 18. 7. Neh. 13. 17. Rev. 1. 20. 41. Prov. 29. 18. *Jun. ad locum, & Shindler. Pentag.* αὕτη (ſc. αἰτία) πόλεις ὀλλυσιν, & *quæ ſequuntur apud Soph.*

preach, to print, what ſeems good to themſelves; & under colour of Chriſtian liberty & free grace, or I know not what new light, to cry downe Magiſtracy, Miniſtery, Repentance, Obedience, ſay I? nay Scripture it ſelfe, Chriſt himſelfe in his Nature and Offices. My Lord, and worthy Senators, I'le trouble you no longer, the reſt you ſhall read in ſilence; *I commend your* Perſons, *your* Imployments, *your* honourable City, *and all your publique* Concernments *to the grace of our Lord Jeſus, beſeeching him to raiſe up ſtill amongſt you Magiſtrates of* Jethro's *marke, men of* might *for* wildome, wealth, courage, *men of* truth (*whether for* Theorie *or* Practice) *but no men for* ſelfe *either ends or turnes: So prayes*

חיל Importes all

Your humble Suppliant and obliged

Servant in our common Lord,

Robert Harris.

To the Reader.

UPon the ſurvey of this Epiſtle to the Right Honourable *Thomas Atkins*, the now Lord Major, &c. I conceived it not amiſſe to adde ſomething more by way of caution; which howſoever it needed not to thoſe that know me, yet being now caſt upon ſtrange men, and ſtrange times, I cannot ſpeak too plainly; be pleaſed then to know, that the men of whom I ſpeak, are not ſuch as are truly (that is, univerſally, charitably and peaceably) conſcionable, nor ſuch as I therefore diſtaſte, becauſe they be of a different opinion in ſome things from my ſelfe: No, the Lord keep me from quarrelling men, becauſe their light is more or leſſe then mine, if that be all their crime, and from judging their conſcience; whileſt ther's no more in it but conſcience, reaching after further information, theſe be not the men I meane, but men of another ſpirit, who condemne the things they doe not underſtand, and goe upon

on principles, and in wayes that will mar all if they be not timely lookt to: What their courſes and tenents be, I am loth to make too publike, & therfore rather intimated then expreſſed them before,& now do much rather deſire their buriall then their life ; to that end, I ſaid ſomething to the honourable Governours and godly Citizens of this place ; and doe further implore and beſeech all others who deſire the peace of the Church, the proſperity of the City, the advancement of Chriſts Kingdome, to bring ſome Buckets towards the quenching of theſe wild and unnaturall fires amongſt us; yea and above the reſt, I humbly pray thoſe of my Brethren to lend herein their hand & help, who are not (as they conceive) indulgent towards them, at leaſt (as others think) moſt prevailing with them. This is all, and this I hope is enough, being added to that which already hath paſſed the Preſſe.

Robert Harris.

A SERMON
TOUCHING
PRAYER and MERCY.

ACTS 10. 31.

And he ſaid, Cornelius, thy Prayer is heard, and thy Alms are in remembrance before God.

WE have in this Chapter two great doubts reſolved: the one a Souldiers, the other a Preachers; both conſult God, and he reſolves both. The Souldier was one *Cornelius*, and his ſcruple was about our bleſſed Saviour, not touching his offices or his nature, (*he knew that there was no other name under heaven whereby he could be ſaved*) but the doubt was touching his perſon, whether this *particular man*, which the Apoſtles cryed up, and the Phariſees cryed down, whether he were *that* Chriſt, *that* Saviour, yea or no: This was the doubt, and this doubt ſends him unto God in a way of prayer, and God ſends him unto *Peter* the *Apoſtle* for information: *Peter* (*the ſecond perſon*) is not without his ſcruple alſo; his doubt was, with what warrant he might go to the *Gentiles* (ſuch *Cornelius* was) & preach

Christ unto them; he also receives satisfaction from the same gracious hand; & now these parties met together, for their further confirmation peruse and read their Commission. First, *Cornelius* begins (at *Peters* motion) and shewes upon what warrant he sent for *Peter*, & gives a very good account of himself, and does very punctually relate the businesse, not by way of *ostentation*, to boast of himselfe, but by way of *satisfaction* to give content unto *Peter*; he gives him to know how that he had certaine intelligence from heaven about this whole businesse of sending for him: for 1. he did use none but Gods meanes to be directed, that is, *Fasting* and *Prayer*; and then next, he received a direct answer from God, and there could not possibly be any place for mistake in the same; he well remembers how long agoe it was that he received his instruction, *(four dayes since)* sayes he, no longer. 2. Then he remembers where he was *(in his house.)* 3. he remembers what he was then doing, he was then *(praying.)* 4. he remembers what time of the day it was *(the ninth houre of the day.)* 5. he remembers the *Messenger* that was sent, he came in the *shape* of *a man*, though he were an *Angel*, and *(in bright shining apparell)* 6. he remembers the message what it was, and what the direction: 1. he calls him by name, and next he wishes him to go to such a place *(Joppa)* there to enquire for one called *(Simon)* this *Simon* lay at another *(Simon's house)* that *Simon* was *(a Tanner)* he lived by the *(Sea side;)* all these circumstances were delivered to *Cornelius*, so that as certainly as *Peter* was *Peter*, and he *Cornelius*, so sure it is that there could be no colluſion or mistake in this businesse, and thereupon he concludes, that *Peter* had a warrant to come, and he a warrant to send, and therefore now nothing hindred, but that they might fall on to their work; this is *Cornelius his account* of himselfe; we will stay at this time in this account of his, and in this verse which we have propounded to you, where we have these particulars observable.

First, a double Act reported, he *prayed*, he *gave Almes*.

And then secondly, this double Act is set forth from a double Argument.

1. From the cause of this, *Cornelius*.

2 From

2. From the conſequence of theſe, his ***Prayer was heard, his Almes*** were obſerved, both were accepted and *(recorded)* by God: theſe be the parts of the Text.

As for the ſimple tearmes, we ſhall not trouble you with many words, they are plaine enough, we will not ſtand here to diſcourſe of the ſeverall acceptations of the firſt word, προσευχὴ, it is taken ſometimes for the *ſervice*, and ſometimes for the *place* where the ſervice was performed; eſpecially in Eccleſiaſticall Authors, and in after times: we underſtand what is meant by ***Prayer*** in this place; this Prayer, it is called *Cornelius his Prayer, (thy prayer)* ſayes the Text. It is true, that all good things, and eſpecially prayer is *cauſally* Gods, and it is *objectively* Gods; it begins from him, it ends in him; but it is *ſubjectively* and *interpretatively Cornelius's* too; it is true, it is God that gives us the *grace* of prayer, as the grace of faith, of repentance, of every good thing; but then the *acting* and the exerciſing of this, that by interpretation and acceptation is *ours*, whiles we doe act the ſame; ſo that God is not ſaid to beleeve, or to repent, or to pray, but man by Gods aſſiſtance, as *Auſten* well: This is all we will ſay for the firſt word, the reſt we will ſpeak of in order as we ſhall come to them, if need ſhall ſo require: in the meane time we addreſſe our ſelves to ſome inſtructions which the words offer to us; we will not trouble you with the wild conceits of ſome men, who talk of certaine *preparations* to grace before grace it ſelfe [*a*] inſtancing *Cornelius*: nor yet of others, who doe ſpeak of heathens and infidels, their acceptance with God, and their ſalvation by God, though they have no knowledge at all [*b*] of *Chriſt*: it is ſufficient for us to know, that *Cornelius* was acquainted with *Chriſt*, and that *Cornelius* did expect ſalvation *onely* by Chriſt; the onely doubt that he ſticks at was this; whether this *individuall perſon*, this *man* now in queſtion, that was lately crucified, now was raiſed up, whether this were *that* Chriſt, that Meſſias *that* he had beleeved in before: Theſe things thus premiſed, we will now proceed. And here it is not my meaning to enter into thoſe vaſt common places of Prayer, and of Almeſ-deeds; we have had occaſion even in this City to ſpeak, divers yeers ſince, in

Sanc. in Act. Apoſt. Grot. in Evange. alioſque paſſim. viſe Turneb. l. 1. adverſar. c. 19.

De grat. & lib. arb. c. 16. & alibi paſſim, &c.

(*a*) *Contra Aug. de prædeſt. concil. Arauſicanum, alioſq;.*
(*b*) *Id quod per ſomnium viderunt è veteribus, è ſcholaſticis, è remonſtrantibus, familiſtis, aliisque ſectariis non ita paucis.*

another place to these heads; we are now to speak another way, and to consider these things as they lye here in the *Relation* made by *Cornelius*, and as they carry with them Gods answer to the one, Gods respect to the other.

2. We will begin with his Prayer, next we will speak of his Almes, rather of *the successe of both*; and then in the third place, we will say somewhat of his *person*, when we have spoken of his actions, if time and strength will give.

Doct. 1. 1. We beseech you to take notice of the unspeakable goodnesse & *graciousnesse* of God towards poore *suppliants* in point of *prayer*, for that is the thing we must grow to; and for this, consider the grounds in the Text, consider the person now in question, *Cornelius*, a poore man, was in a very great streight, faine he would please God, faine he would save his soule; neither of these could be done without a Christ, and Christ must now be beleeved in, in a *higher* and *closer* way then before; it is not enough for him to beleeve, *Christum*, or in *Christo*, but he must beleeve that this is *the very Christ*, that this is the man and none else. Now here sticks the doubt; the Doctors were mightily divided about this point; the Pharisees and those happily that had been meanes of his conversion from heathenisme to Judaisme, they were altogether against Christ, and looked upon him, and reported him as a seducer. On the other side, a few unlearned men they stood for him, and they preached that there was no other way to salvation but in and through this *crucified* person; in this case, what should poore *Cornelius* doe more then what he did? namely, to betake himselfe to God in way of prayer, and to desire direction from him in this his doubt; and thus he does, and you see with what *successe* he does it, how *graciously* the Lord does condescend and answer him.

1. The Lord does heare him, nay, he does heare him *effectually*, for that is the force of the word here used in the compound in our Text, ἐπακούω.

Heb. 5. 7.

God did heare him to purpose, I say, heard him graciously; and not onely so, 2. but he does send him *word* that he heard him, and sent him word too 3. by an *Angel*, and gives him 4. to understand, how that his prayer and all his services

are

are *accepted* of God. Oh! what a comfort was this to a poor distressed soul, to have so punctuall, so direct an answer sent him from heaven unto his prayer, and unto his scruples! but thus deales God with his Children, never more kind unto his, then when they come unto him begging; then when men begin to be shye and strange, and to stand off, and to hold off at a distance, *then* is God most free, most open, most gracious unto his people; this we see in this *Cornelius* here; goe (sayes God) when he had prayed; goe, sayes God unto an Angel, commend me to *Cornelius*, tell him from me, that he is more in my bookes then he is aware of; I take notice of his *name*, I take notice of his *prayer*, I take notice of every *Almes-deed* that he does bestow upon my people, I observe all these things, yea, I record them, and they ever live and stand good *before me*: what could be said more to the encouragement of a poore suppliant? thus God deales with *Cornelius*: And thus, you know, he dealt with *Daniel*; the case is much what alike, in the 9. of *Dan.* 20. and so forward; you shall read *Daniels succesſe* upon his prayer, he prayed for the people of God; and how speeds he? very well: Observe the circumstances in the Text, the time 1.
when God does answer him, even *whilst he was praying*, sayes the Text; nay (sayes the holy Ghost there) even at the *beginning*, at the first setting out of his petition, the answer, the grant was sealed, and his petition accepted, God did yeeld unto the same at the very entrance; he could no sooner begin to speak, but God resolves of a word of comfort and grace to him. Consider another circumstance, and that is, the Messenger that God sends to him, he dispatches an Angel 2.
Gabriel, that earst had been with him (it seems) upon other occasions, he comes to him with a *Message*, and he tels him 3.
that he is accepted of God; the greeting is this; O *Daniel*, *greatly beloved*; O *Daniel* the great favourite of heaven, understand that the great God takes notice of thee, and he writes thy petitions, and hath sent me to returne his answer unto thy suite; and the answer is very full and very 4.
satisfying; he grants him what he did desire, he tels him of *more* then *Daniel* did put into his petition; so gracious is

God unto his people when they ſue unto him in this way of prayer: What ſhould I inſtance *Abraham* now? what ſhould I ſpeak of *Jacob*, of *David*, of *Hannah*, of *Jonah*, of other particulars in this caſe? I'le conclude with one, *Paul*, and I'le but touch upon it: in the Chapter before my Text at the 11. verſe, you ſhall read how God deales with this ſame *Paul*; *Paul (alias Saul)* was ſometime very rough and boiſtrous, breathed out nothing but blood and threats; then God deals with him in a rougher way: but now *Paul* is on his knees, and mark what followes, preſently the Lord diſpatches one *Ananias* unto him; *Ananias* (ſayes he) goe to *Paul*, thou ſhalt find him in ſuch a *place*, thou ſhalt have him there at his 'prayers, goe to him, tell him from me, 'that he is a choyce, 'a precious Veſſell in my eyes, and in my eſteem, let him un-'derſtand ſo much from me; *Ananias*, he begins to ſtartle; Oh Lord! (ſayes he) this man hath been a perſecutor, and he came hither for to doe miſchiefe, I am afraid to come at him: tuſh (ſayes God) be not ſo ſhye of him now; be not ſo ſhye, deliver to him from me a meſſage, and a word of grace and comfort; and why? for (ſayes God) *he prayes*, he prayes (ſayes God) that is the reaſon of it; now *Paul* is a *praying Paul*, the caſe is altered; it is a time of his *praying*, and therefore it is a time of my *pitying*, and of my mercy; now he prayes, I accept of him, doe thou accept of him; and ſo *Ananias* does, for he goes to him, and preſently ſalutes him; *Brother Saul* (ſayes he;) when he is Gods *child*, he is his *Brother* ſtreight, all quarrels are laid downe aſſoon as ever *Saul* fals to *praying*; he *prayes* (ſayes God;) that is ſufficient. You ſee how graciouſly God deales with his when they fall a praying once.

Now if you would know a reaſon of this, why God ſhewes himſelfe ſo gracious to us in the time and caſe of prayer; the *Reaſ.* 1. reaſon is not from any *worth* of our perſons, or of our prayers, in themſelves conſidered: for alas! what are they in the ſight of God? or what need hath he of any ſervice from us at all? you know in the law the burning and broyling of ſo many beaſts, eſpecially with hides and all (as ſometime it fell out) was a thing that yeelded no ſavour of reſt at all in it ſelfe: what

what could come from this, but a filthy ſmoak, a filthy ſtench? but then there was added thereto wine & oyle, and incenſe of Gods appointment, and ſo it was Gods Ordinance, and then there was a ſavour of reſt in it; Think the ſame for our prayers too, as they come from us, and are onely ours; there's nothing in them of worth or acceptance: But when Gods Spirit is in it, when Gods incenſe, Gods perfume is put to it, with his bleſſing upon his owne way and Ordinance, then they come to be accepted, not (I ſay) ſimply, becauſe they are ours, but becauſe they are Gods; God goes upon his owne motives, he graces and reſpects our prayers; but why? becauſe he loves prayers as *his owne*, and the party praying as his *owne*; and becauſe he delights in mercy prayed for, and for other reaſons that we ſhall give you by and by. 2 *Affirmation.*

First of all, God, he does love prayer, *Pro.* 15. 8. The prayer of the righteous is his delight; it is Gods muſick, it is recreation; it is called incenſe, in this reſpect it is pleaſing and acceptable unto God, prayer is his delight, becauſe that it is his own appointment and Ordinance, and that Ordinance that ſets God in the Throne (if I may ſo ſpeak) I meane that repreſents him as God unto his people; for we never give unto God the glory of himſelfe untill ſuch time as we fall a praying; but prayer gives away *all* from the creature, it carries *all* to God; and ſo ſets up God, and therefore God is pleaſed with prayer, and delights in the ſame.

And then againe, God loves the party praying (we ſpeak of Gods children that doe pray) I ſay, he loves the party *praying* too; and when the perſon is accepted, then you know any thing paſſes very well; let that Damoſell, in *Mark* 6. 22. pleaſe *Herod*, though in a toy, you know what *Herod* ſayes to her ſtraight, aske what thou wilt (ſayes he) it ſhall be given unto thee; let *Eſther* pleaſe *Ahaſuerus*, and then ſhee need not wooe him, he will wooe her; ſpeak (ſayes he) O Queen *Eſther*, what is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt? and it ſhall be granted unto thee. God delights in the perſons of his children, he loves them dearly; and becauſe they are ſo precious in his eyes, their prayers and their entreaties are very welcome to him, *John* 16. 26.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, God is a God that delights in mercy, as the Scripture tels us; *he delights in mercy*, sayes *Jeremy*; and, sayes *Micah*, *mercy pleases him*: God is very well pleased when he hath an *opportunity* to shew his bounty, and to exercise his mercy, and his graciousnesse towards his people (and when he finds them on their knees, then they are in a capacity of mercy:) God is pleased with this, even to scatter mercy, and to shew himselfe a bountifull God, he delights herein, therefore does even *heap* mercy upon his people when they are capable of the same: *Hitherto*, sayes Christ in the 16. of John 24. *hitherto you have asked nothing in my name, aske and you shall receive. Nothing*, that is, nothing to speak of, as if he would say, nothing that I value at any thing, I doe not satisfie my selfe in that which I have done for you hitherto, you have hitherto asked nothing to speak of, aske more, I am ready to give you more; so large are his bowels and his favours towards his people; God stands disposed to his when they come asking, as *Naaman* sometimes did, 2 *King.* 5. toward *Gehezi*; *Gehezi* comes to aske one talent, and one suit of raiment for each Levite (that he suggests and sues for;) but what sayes *Naaman* to him? nay, take two; one is too little, take two, and the Text tels us that he did *presse him*, and heaps them upon him: So deales God with his people when they come to him for mercy and for kindnesse; nay (sayes God) take more, or at least, I would you were capable of more, I could as willingly give it, as you are willing to receive it, if the stay were not on your owne part: God loves mercy, and therefore is ready to entertaine the prayers of his children when they come for mercy. As there are these reasons taken from Gods gracious and blessed *nature*; so others may be added from other occasions.

Jer. 9. 24. Micah 7. 18.

Fourthly, from the engagements that lye upon God, in regard of his free and gracious promises; promises very *free* and very *large*, both for the *matter* that we shall ask; ask whatsoever you will, ask in my name (sayes Christ) you shall receive it: as also for the *measure*, open thy mouth wide (sayes God) and I will fill it: as also for the *time* when God will doe it, *before you speak I will heare, and while you are speaking*

John 14. 13. Psal. 81. 10.

I

I will answer, in the 65. of *Isaiah*. I forbeare to name other places, because they are familiarly knowne to you, so that God having engaged himself by promise to doe great things, and (as he sayes in the Prophet) to be *very gracious* unto his people in point of prayer, therefore certainly he will be as good as his word. Isa.30.19.

And last of all, (which is the maine reason of all in truth) the reason is from *Christ*, and from that *Covenant* and transaction that passes between *Christ* and his Father: Christ, he presents our prayers, nay, we present Christ unto his Father; God looks upon a Christian as a piece and a *member* of Christ, he looks upon his prayer, as the *fruit* of Christs intercession and Priestdome; our prayers (being Saints) are indited by Christs *Spirit*, and are presented by Christs *hand* unto his Father; they are perfumed with his intercession, and with his incense, and therefore it is certaine they be very pleasing to God: God for Christs sake will deny none that come in the name and in the Spirit of the Lord Christ; nay, God hath left the whole *dispensation* of this businesse unto the Lord Christ, and hath referred all to him, even to doe what he will with the Saints in the Church, as sometimes *Ahasuerus* did with *Esther*, left it to her what she would have done for her people and against her enemies; and as sometimes *Pharaoh* said to *Joseph*, *Joseph* (sayes he) thy brethren are come into *Egypt* unto thee, bid them welcome, take the Land at thy command, place them where thou thinkest good; so unto the same effect does God say unto the Lord Christ, 'here be friends of thine, members of thine, that are bone of 'thy bone, flesh of thy flesh, they come to me for some relieve 'and succour in thy name, here they be, receive them, take 'them, doe for them what thou seest good, I will ratifie it, I will make it good; this is the maine reason: And these are the reasons which I shall give you of the point, why the Lord is so gracious unto his poore servants, when they come a begging and a suing unto him. Now give me leave in a few words to bring home this point, and to apply it, and then we will passe to another. Revel.8.4.

Use 1.

First of all, this must instruct us in regard of *time past*, it *For time* must *r. past.*

must be matter of humbling and of blushing unto us, that we have not answered the Lord, and returned according to the kindnesse that we have received, we doe not give unto God the glory of his goodnesse and of his graciousnesse in answering prayer, but *come* many times with a great deale of feare, *appeare* before him with many doubts, and *returne* from him with a great deale of sadnesse and heavinesse: Oh! how does this offend and displease God? The Emperour was sorry that any man should come to offer a Petition to him, as if he were to offer meat to an Elephant (as he said) with a trembling hand: Another, he was sorry to see any man goe sadly out of his presence; and can the Lord doe otherwise,, but take it unkindly (as it were) at his peoples hands, who are so deare unto him, whenas they are so jealous, so doubtfull, so fearfull how they shall be accepted, and speed, when they come in point of prayer to him? Well, that is a thing we are to blame our selves for first.

Flavius. Titus, &c.

2. *Present.* And then in the second place, this teaches us for *the present* to take notice of Gods goodnesse this way, and to blesse and praise him for this his free grace, in hearing *poore* sinners, and *poore Petitions* put up unto him from time to time: This *David* took notice of, he would love the Lord, because God heard his prayer in one Psalme: In another he blesses God, Blessed be God (sayes he) that thou hast not rejected my prayer, nor turned thy mercy from me, *Psal.* 66. 3. Blessed be God, why? that God did not *scorne* his prayer, that God did not fling it away from him with indignation; thus *David*: And truly, if we did truly understand the infinite *distance* that is between God and us, and those many, many *flawes* and defects that be in our prayers and services; did we understand these things aright (his Excellency, and our owne lesse then nothingnesse) certainly we could not but stand in admiration at his goodnesse this way: Let me expresse my selfe unto you in a comparison, thus: Suppose that we must alwayes in all our suits apply our selves unto the King, and goe to him with our Petitions, what a businesse would this be? Consider of it I beseech you, 1. what a long journey we must take; and then, how long we must wait;

Psal. 116. 1. Psal. 6. 9.

wait;and then,how uncertaine we ſhould be of any ſucceſſe or gracious anſwer at all: Weigh theſe things with your ſelves, and then reflect upon Gods goodneſſe, and admire him for the ſame: I inlarge it a little further: A man hath a ſuit unto an earthly King or Prince, and what muſt he doe? Firſt of all he muſt take a long journey to the Kings Court; and then when he is there,he muſt find out ſomeCourtiers,ſome friends to ſpeak for him, and to make way for him, that he may have acceſſe; when that is done, he muſt wait the Kings leiſure, early and late he muſt be ready to wait, and ſo ſtay his leiſure, and his pleaſure: When this is done, that he hath got acceſſe once, and is brought into the Kings preſence, how then? he is not permitted to ſpeak his heart unto the King, and to ſay at large what his griefe and his affliction is; nay, he muſt not ſpeak at all, onely deliver his Petition, and that he muſt have ready drawne, and fairly drawne, there muſt be no blurre in it, very briefe it muſt be, and very ſuccinct, he muſt not ſpeak any thing in the world that is impertinent, or that would be diſpleaſing, but carry it ſo, as that he may give full content: And when all this is done, and his Petition is received, he hath not preſently an anſwer, but he muſt wait and wait againe, he muſt follow the Court into this place, and that place; and when anſwer does come, it may be it is but halfe an anſwer and a grant, perhaps the anſwer is none other but a bare deniall, at leaſt a man cannot build upon it, becauſe he hath no promiſe before-hand that he ſhall be accepted,and that his petition ſhall be granted: Thus it is when we deale with an earthly Prince, when we come but upon one Petition: But now put the caſe that this Petition be granted, what is it? it is but for ſome partiall or ſome particular thing; 'tis not a grant that will make me happy, and that will doe my ſoule any good at all, I ſhall need more things; and what if I need againe,muſt I to the Court again? muſt I wait againe? muſt I run the ſame round I ran before? Oh how troubleſome, how coſtly, how tedious would this be unto me? And if this be ſo (my brethren) as you know it is, then I beſeech you doe but conſider how infinitely we ſtand bound to Almighty God for his goodneſſe and his gra-

ciouſneſſe towards us this way: Alas! we need him *every* houre, and when we need him we may goe to him *when we will*, he is alwayes at *leiſure*; come in the night and welcome, come in the day and welcome; and when we come, he is *ready* to receive us: his doors (as the doors of the Tribunes once in *Rome*) are never ſhut, they alwayes ſtand open for petitioners that ſhall come unto him; and thou mayeſt there ſpeak *thy mind*, and ſpeak thy heart; all thy feares, all thy griefes, all thy wants thou mayeſt tell him at *large*, how the caſe ſtands with thee, and ſpeak it in thy owne *language*, in ſuch Engliſh and ſuch termes as thou art able for to utter and to ſpeak; and if thy Petition be not right, he will *correct* it and make it good for thee, he will alter it, he will mend it for thy *advantage*, and for thy benefit; and if it be too ſhort, he will *ſupply it*, and bid thee put in more; and when he hath laded thee with mercy from his preſence, as ſometimes *Boaz* did *Ruth*, then he will give in charge that thou ſhouldeſt come *againe* to morrow, and that thou ſhouldſt not be *too long* from him; he layes it as a charge upon thee, that thou ſhouldſt not be a ſtranger to him, but that thou ſhouldſt make uſe from time to time of his kindneſſe, and the oftener the *better welcome* ſtill: This, this is the graciouſneſſe of our God unto his poore people; we need not goe farre, but ſtep into our cloſets, there unbowell our ſelves, and unboſome our ſoules, and acquaint him with our ſorrowes and griefes, and he is ready to heare us, and willing to paſſe by infirmities, and to accept of our weak (very weak) prayers, when they are put up in truth and in humility: Oh conſider of this, and let the meditation of this now ſtirre you up unto thankfulneſſe to God; his grace, his goodneſſe is ſo great this way, as that I am ſwallowed up in the meditation of it, and I have not words to expreſſe what his tenderneſſe and his graciouſneſſe is unto us in every one petition that we put up unto him; you doe not know what a *friend* you have of God, and how many, *many favours* and kindneſſes he ſhewes you in any *one* Petition that he hearkens unto, and grants to you at any time.

In

In the laſt place, this looks *forward* too, and it teaches us a third thing, and then we have done with the firſt part: The thing is this: 3. *Future.*

Sith God is ſo gracious towards his people in point of prayer, therefore we ſhould be invited *now*, and encouraged to make uſe of this his kindneſſe, and to goe to him upon this errand of prayer, as need ſhall require: Let us, I beſeech you, think as meanly of our ſelves, and of our ſervices as you will; but let us alwayes have high thoughts of God, and when we come to him in his owne way, then promiſe great things to our ſelves: And know, that he is able and ready to doe abundantly above that we can ſpeake or think (as the Apoſtle tels us;) thus we ſhould goe to God, and of his goodneſſe herein we have a great deale of experience; if we will not beleeve the *promiſes* that are very gracious, yet let us beleeve our owne *experience* this way to truſt in him: hath not God been gracious *to us* in *particular*, hath not God been gracious to us in *common*, for the publike, when we have ſought unto him in this way of prayer? If ſo, then let us conclude, that God is a conſtant God, his power as great as ever, his love as much as ever, his truth the ſame for ever; he loves prayer as well as ever he did; he loves *Chriſt* as well as ever he did, who is our Mediator; and he loves the *perſons* of the Elect as much as ever he did; he delights in *mercy* as much as ever; therefore let this encourage us to goe to God in all our afflictions and diſtreſſes, whether they are *perſonall*, or whether they are *publike*. Ephes. 3.

1. For our perſonall defects, and our perſonall diſtreſſes, let us goe to God as *Cornelius* here does; *Cornelius*, he is in a ſtreight, and it was in a point of great concernment, he muſt reſolve one way or other, off or on; either be for this Chriſt, or againſt him; *Cornelius* knew not which way to reſolve, he prayes therefore, he deſires God that he would *enlighten* him, that he would direct him: Oh! let us doe the like in theſe diſtreſſed times, when there be ſuch diviſions and diſtractions in the Church of God, and amongſt the people of God, that a poore ſimple body knowes not what is right, and what is

truth, and what is not; knowes not which ſide to adhere unto: Some call him this way, and ſome call him that way; and another ſayes this is right, and you muſt goe this way if ever you will be ſaved; and another ſpeaks quite to the contrary: What now ſhould a poore man doe? Doe as *Cornelius* did, goe unto God alone, pray, faſt, importune him, deſire him that he will teach thee, that he will *reſolve* thee, deſire him that he would ſend ſome *Peter* to thee, ſome Preacher, ſome Divine or other, that may ſettle thee and confirme thee in the way that thou ſhouldſt goe: Thus if we doe, God will be the ſame to us that he was unto *Cornelius*, God heard him, and God will heare us too, though he doe not ſend an Angel from Heaven as he did to him, yet he will ſend ſome *Peter*, he will ſend ſome direction whereby we ſhall receive ſome ſatisfaction, at leaſt for thoſe things that are *ſimply neceſſary* and fundamentall; he will diſcover ſo much unto us, as ſhall be *accepted*, and as ſhall guide us unto his Heavens: This is his promiſe, *Pſal.* 25. he will guide the meek in his way, and he will teach ſinners the way, and he will ſhew unto them his ſalvation; and in *John* 7. 17. ſayes our Saviour, *He that will doe the will of God, he ſhall know the doctrine whether it be of God or no:* If a man in *humility* of ſpirit, and in *ſincerity* and truth of heart will goe to God for direction, as *Cornelius* did, reſolving with him, I and mine are here before God, and *whatſoever* God ſhall ſpeak unto us in his *miniſtery*, we are ready to doe it, and to follow it: If any man will doe thus, it is certaine that God will give him a reſolution and a ſettlement, and ſuch a ſettlement as ſhall be acceptable (as we ſaid before) and ſhall give ſatisfaction to his ſoule. What I ſpeak of this particular (becauſe the very caſe leads me to it, in my Text) that we may ſay of all other things too: Carry *all* thy feares to God, and *all* thy ſorrowes to God, and *all* thy ſcruples to God, acquaint him with thy caſe, and beg help and ſtrength from him, he is able, he is ready to heare. Yea but will he heare (*me?*) Yea *thee*, he will heare *thee*. Oh! but my prayers are weak, and poore: He is a gracious God, he paſſes by infirmities, doe what thou art able to doe, and

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he is as ready to help thee as *Cornelius*. 2. What we ſay for *private* men, that we may ſay much more now, in the *publike* Caſe, when it comes to publike prayer, and to matter of a publike concernment, here we ſhould be encouraged to goe to God: Is God ſo ready to heare prayer? does he ſo graciouſly anſwer and accept of poore and weak prayer? Then, I beſeech you, why ſhould not we goe to God in reſpect of the *Kingdome*, in reſpect of the *Church*, and in reſpect of the preſent *condition* that we lye under now? Oh! let us all ſet a praying; pray home the King, pray downe Antichriſt, pray up the Lord Chriſt into his Throne, pray againſt the ſinnes of the Land, that they may be removed, and all thoſe *obſtructions* that doe hinder the ſucceſſe of our prayers from day to day; for certainly there are very ſtrange and *great* obſtructions that lye in the way, otherwiſe it were not poſſible for our graciuos God that is ſo ready to heare the Petitions of *one* poore man, to ſtand out ſo long againſt the ſuits and petitions of *all* the people in a whole *Nation*; the obſtructions are great, pray all theſe out of the way. Of theſe I will inſtance one or two. I will leave the reſt in regard of my haſte.

Obſtructions in prayer, and its ſucceſſe.

One maine thing which probably hinders our ſucceſſes in prayer is the *blood* that lyes upon the Land, that is a heavy thing, that lyes heavy upon the heart of the Land. 'Tis ſaid, 2 *King.* 24. 4. that God would not pardon the blood that *Manaſſes* ſhed in *Jeruſalem*; he filled *Jeruſalem* and the Land from corner to corner with innocent blood; God (ſayes the Text there) would not pardon this ſinne: Nay, this ſinne lived ſome ſucceſſions, after that *Manaſſes* was dead. Oh! this ſinne, this ſinne threatens this Land of ours! this blood that lyes upon the Land, the blood that was ſhed heretofore in the dayes of Queen *Mary*, that innocent blood that hath been ſhed ſince by this unhappy difference that is amongſt us: Oh! the Sea of blood that runs through this Land; who muſt be *reſponſall*, who muſt be anſwerable for this? this is a great ſinne that obſtructs our prayers much. It behooves us, Beloved, to doe as God ordered them in *Deut.* 21. 8. when there

there was innocent blood ſhed, and the murderer could not be found out, then the neighbouring Townes they muſt goe forth, they muſt ſlay a Beaſt, offer a Sacrifice, waſh their hands, pray to God; Oh Lord! be mercifull unto the Land, and unto our Cities, lay not to our charge this blood: So muſt we doe in this caſe; Oh Lord, be mercifull unto this poore Land almoſt drowned in blood, doe not charge upon us this blood, lay not to our charge this innocent blood, but accept of a Sacrifice, and an atonement: That is one thing we muſt pray againſt, as a maine obſtruction.

2. And another is this, *non-execution* of Juſtice; let *David* in 2 *Sam.* 21. let *David* (I ſay) wait, and ſtay, and pray from yeer to yeer for the removall of the ſtroke that was then upon the Land, untill ſuch time as *execution* be done upon the bloody houſe of *Saul*, there will be no ceſſation of that ſtroke and of the famine that was then upon them; but aſſoone as ever that was done, and juſtice executed, preſently the face of the State was changed, and the Lord ſhewed himſelfe a reconciled God: Oh! let us pray here againe, that God would ſtirre up many a *Phinehas* in this age, and that he would give the Pſal. 106. 30. ſpirit of *Phinehas* to thoſe that be in authority, that they may doe execution, and ſo the plague may ceaſe: Now it is ſaid of *Phinehas*, he did an *execution*, ſo the plague ceaſed: Let us pray, that there may be found in this City, and in other parts of the Kingdome, ſuch a man as *Jeremy* deſcribes, *chap.* 5. 1. A man that does judgement, a man that ſeeks for truth (he is a man) a *publike* man that ſtands in the gap: pray, that we may have ſuch to ſtand in the breach.

3. And then thirdly; there is a third obſtruction, and that is the fearfull indiſpoſition to *peace* that is amongſt us, and an aptneſſe to quarrell and fall out within our ſelves; I ſpeak not onely of that outward warre that is abroad, but I ſpeak of another buſineſſe within our ſelves; if God would put up his ſword, it is a queſtion whether we would put up ours, yea or no: I am afraid of a *ſacred* warre, if the civill warre were once ended and determined; many ſpirits are ſo imbittered one againſt another, men are ſo inchanted with their owne conceits

conceits and opinions, that they will put all into a combuſtion, rather then they will lay downe any one conceit, or any one quarrell or contention that they have engaged themſelves in; this is a fearfull thing; how can we look that God ſhould put an end to our warres, when we are ſo willing to be at warre one with another, brother againſt brother, and friend againſt friend, without any difference almoſt?

But laſt of all, there is another, and that ſummes up all; 4.
and that is our unworthy *carriage towards* God in the midſt of ſo many meanes and mercies: He hath given us his *Word*; we *ſleight* that; he hath made a *Covenant* with us, and we have renewed the Seale thereof, many of us (I doubt not) of late: this Covenant we falſifie, we prophane and abuſe; the Lord hath executed *ſome judgements* amongſt us, and what uſe doe we make of them? where is the man (almoſt) that is one whit reformed, or much the better for all theſe miſeries and calamities that have come upon the State, and upon the Land? this, this is *the ſinne*, the provoking ſinne, that we are too-to incorrigible this way, and tooto backward to improve thoſe meanes and thoſe judgements which are amongſt us: For this God might juſtly have a controverſie with the Land; Oh! let us pray, let us pray, that we may be of one mind, and of one judgement, that ſo there may be peace in our Land, peace in our Churches, peace in our worſhips, that we doe not fight againſt our ſelves in our prayers: And let us pray in the next place, that we may make better uſe of the Word, and of the miniſtery thereof; that we may make better uſe of former corrections, and former judgements then we have done, that ſo the Lord at length may look upon us, and when we are humbled and doe accept of his puniſhment, may then remember the Land, our diſtreſſed Land, our reeling Land, our dying Land, that God in mercy may then think upon it, and heale it: This we ſhould labour, even to pray unto God for the publike, that all hinderances may be removed, and all furtherances expedited, whereby our happineſſe may be recovered and reſetled: And why ſhould we not ſet upon this work now? what reaſon have we to be diſmaid? Happily ſome *Object.*

will ſuggeſt, we ſee our prayers doe not take, and that we doe not ſucceed as we would; nay, the Lord frownes upon
Sol. us, and hides his face from us. Yea, but hang upon him ſtill, pray ſtill, follow him ſtill; doe as *Cornelius* did, think of a *Reformation*; lay not all upon praying, and all upon faſting, but doe more, as he does; *Cornelius* prayes, but he *feares* God too; *Cornelius* prayes, but he *reformes his Family* too, (he had Servants, yea, Souldiers too, that feared God in his Family;) *Cornelius* prayes, but he hath reſpect to all Gods Commandements, to *both Tables* as well as unto one: *Cornelius* prayes, but he is faithfull in the *particular* place and calling wherein God had ſet him; he was a good Souldier, he was a faithfull Officer and Centurion in the place that he did ſuſtaine; and when as we are thus univerſally good, ſutable unto our ſelves, that we are good *Chriſtians*, and that we are good *Maſters*, and that we are good *Commanders*, and that we are good *Souldiers*, (good and faithfull in the particular places wherein God hath ſet us) then our prayers will paſſe, and then God will be ſo gracious to us, as he was unto *Cornelius*: And ſo we leave that poynt with you.

The next thing *Cornelius* does, is a work of *mercy*; he gives Almes; he was not onely a *juſt* man, but he was a *merciſull* man, & was merciſull *throughout*; he had a merciſull *hand*, and he had a merciſull *heart*: The word here uſed ἐλεημοσύνη, with words of that *forme* & termination, as δικαιοσύνη, and the like, is very comprehenſive; it implyes and concludes both, *affectum & effectum*, ſo that he does exerciſe mercy with a very merciſull and a gracious *heart* and affection: The thing here directly ſpoken of is the *fruits* of his mercy, the effects thereof, as the *plurall* does ſhew us; and theſe are ſaid for to be *before God*; they are *before God*, as they are acted by *Cornelius*; he did them in ſincerity; and they are *before God*, as they are recorded by God too, God ſets them upon record, would keep them in memory, they are *remembred of God*, as the Text here tels us. I ſhall not need to tell you how that memory is too low a thing for to be *properly* aſcribed unto God, he is one that ſees and knowes all things at once, *ſub uno eodemque intuitu*

intuitu, ſo that he hath no uſe of memory at all, but the Lord is pleaſed to apply himſelfe to our *capacity*, and to condeſcend to us; and the plaine meaning is this, that God does obſerve and book (there is a condeſcention in that expreſſion too;) God obſerves, and God does book (I ſay) every act, and every work of mercy that is done by his Servants, and by his People; God takes notice of them all, and notes them, in their circumſtances, and with the *particularities* of the ſame; he obſerveth 1. *who* it is that does a work of mercy, *Cornelius:* he obſerveth 2. *what's* the thing that he does, he does (many Acts) of mercy, and that mercy *properly*, which hath reſpect unto mans preſent *life* and *livelyhood*, that is the mercy here ſpoken of: 3. He takes notice *how much* mercy a man ſhewes; he gave *much Almes*, as 'tis ſaid in this Chapter; and *Dorcas* made *many* Coates for many poore perſons: God takes notice of 4. the *Time* when a man ſhewes mercy; *Obadiah* in a hard time, he hid a hundred Prophets, and ſhewed them mercy then, 1 *King.* 18. 5. God takes 5. notice *how* a man does mercy, with what heart, and with what inlargement of affection, as he does thoſe Macedonians, 2 Cor. 8. that they in their extreame *poverty*, did ſhew mercy to their power, and beyond their power: 6. Yea, God takes notice of the *leaſt degree* of mercy that is ſhewed by his Servants to any of his people, even to a little *cake* of bread, as he does in the Book of Kings in the Widow; and to one *cup* of cold water, as he he does in the Goſpell; verily, if a man give but a cup of water; (*water*) that is a cheap thing; cold water, no matter either of coſt or paines; ſayes he, if he gives ſuch a cup of water to *the leaſt* of *mine*, it ſhall not be forgotten, it ſhall be rewarded: So that God, you ſee, takes particular notice, writes downe, books downe every act and work of mercy that is done by his people. I could be large in proving of this now, but I ſhall not need to ſay more to ſuch an *underſtanding* auditory; I muſt haſten, in regard of the time and my owne ſtrength.

Doct.

1. 2. 3. Acts 9. 4. 5. 6. 1 Kin. 17.30. Matth. 10.42. *Grot. ad locum.*

What may be the grounds and reaſons of this, that God does thus book and write downe every work of mercy? The

Reaſ. 1. *Negative*

is not from the worth (as we ſaid before, of prayer:) So here, not from the *worth* of our works, and of thoſe Almes that we are able to give; as the Farmers of merit in another world and in another Church uſe for to ſpeak, who are very *high* in their expreſſions this way, touching their Mercy, their Alms, their good Deeds, for which they expect a great deale of thanks, and *reſpect from* God, but without reaſon; for certainly (as one hath well obſerved) it is very true that many of thoſe things which they called works of mercy, were indeed the works of *penance*, and were but *mulcts*, fines & amercements, laid upon them by their Confeſſors for faults that they had committed; and certaine it is, that many of thoſe that they did ſo bragge and boaſt of, are *more ours* a great deale then *theirs*: However the Doners were tainted and ſunburnt with ſome particulars of Popery; yet in the maine, many of them were more ours, then theirs: So that they have no reaſon to bragge that way. In truth, what is a mans mercy to God? our goodneſſe reacheth not to him; what can we give him, but what is his owne already, and what he hath given us firſt? So that that cannot be the reaſon why God reſpects our mercy, for any worth or dignity that is in our Almes: But the reaſon is this; God is pleaſed in Chriſt to look upon our *perſons*, and then next to accept of our *ſervices* for Chriſts ſake; and ſo in particular of our Almes: God is pleaſed to reſpect them, becauſe they are *expreſſions* of Chriſts Spirit, and the *fruits* of his owne Spirit, and becauſe they are *Seales* of our obedience, and of our thankfulneſſe unto him; and becauſe that they are *meanes* of refreſhing the bowels of his poore Servants. For theſe cauſes, and under theſe names and notions it is, that God takes notice of our Almes and Works of mercy, and daignes to regard and write them: Write them, how? not to help *his* owne *memory* (that needs not) but to *help our Faith*, and to *help our Love*, that we ſhould be encouraged in this way to doe works of mercy. I have ſpoken as briefly as I can unto the point, and yet, I think, ſufficient for ſo plaine a point as this is. All the buſineſſe here lyes in the Application and the Uſe of this.

Cartw. on the Rhem. Teſt.

Reaſons.

2. Affirmat.

And

And the Uſes (Honoured and Beloved) are theſe. *Uſe.*

If this be ſo, that God takes *particular notice*, and writes downe every work of mercy that is done; then this ſpeakes but ſad newes unto divers ſorts of people. 1.

The firſt are ſuch men as are meere *ſtrangers unto mercy*, and the fruits thereof; they were never guilty of ſuch a thing as Mercy and Almeſ-deeds: If you compare the Books (Gods and theirs) together, you ſhall find the Books much what alike unto ſome *Almanacks*, that are full of letters, both red and black & bloody on one ſide, but on the other ſide there is fair paper, a waſte empty blank, that is all that is to be found there: Even ſo it is with many a mans books, if he be a true recorder of his works of mercy: On the one ſide, you ſhall find, *Item*, ſo much ſpent upon *Pride*, and ſo much ſpent upon *Luſt*, and ſo much ſpent upon *Revenge*, and ſo much ſpent at *Dice*, and ſo much ſpent in *Playes*, and ſo much ſpent upon *ſinne* and Wickedneſſe; this ſide is full of what hath been laid out touching themſelves, and for themſelves in purſuſuance of their luſts: But now when it comes to a work of mercy, what have you done *for God?* what for *Chriſt?* what for the *members* of Chriſt? what for the advancement of *Religion?* or any *pious* work or ſervice? what ſhall you find there? Even a blank, meere cyphers, nothing elſe. Oh miſerable men! how will theſe fare when they ſhall be called to an accompt for their *Stewardſhip?* when they have laid out all for themſelves, and upon themſelves and their luſts, and laid out nothing at all for *God*, and for the love of God. This is one ſort. 1.

But then there is another ſort worſe then theſe, and they are ſuch as are not onely ſtrangers unto mercy, but are *Oppoſites*, *Enemies*, (as it were) to mercy; at leaſt they walk in a quite oppoſite way unto the way of mercy: Theſe, why theſe do not *feed* the poor, but they *flay* them; they do not *cloath* them, but they *ſtrip* them; they make not any *proviſion* for them, but caſt how utterly to *ruine* and to *undoe* them: In ſtead of *healing* them they *wound* them; in ſtead of *relieving* them, they *oppreſſe* them, and in ſtead of being to them any *eaſe* and 2.

comfort, they lay upon them *heavy burdens*, heavy preſſures: This is a black crying ſinne, and will prove ſo at the *laſt* day; what? if they in *Matth.*25. (as *Auſtin* well inferres thence) if they ſhall be ſhut *out* of Heaven, and ſent from the *preſence* of God with a curſe, who have not *fed* the hungry, nor *cloathed* the naked, nor *viſited* the impriſoned? &c. Oh then! where ſhall they appeare? and what ſhall become of them that are ſo farre from this, that they have done what they could to *ſuck* out the very blood of the poor members of Jeſus Chriſt! This is a ſecond ſort.

3. Nay, in the third place, let this be a matter of humbling to the *beſt* of us, for certainly we are all ſhort in this buſineſſe, and have cauſe even to bluſh and hang downe our heads, betwixt *man and man* when it comes to a *contribution*, and we ſee other men underwrite, it may be, ſo many *crownes*, or ſo many *pounds*, we are aſhamed to appeare in the ſame Roll, and to have our names liſted where *farthings* and *half-pence* are ſet upon our heads; much more ſhould we bluſh when we bring our ſelves into the preſence of *God*, and there conſider that God ſees all *we* doe, all that *others* have done; he writes downe every mans *name*, every mans *worke*, every mans *Almes*, and they are *bookt*, and this book will be read and produced at the laſt day: This, this ſhould put us to the bluſh, eſpecially when we conſider two things yet found upon us: 1. That is, our *backwardneſſe* unto works of mercy; and 2. our *barrenneſſe* in works of mercy.

1. First, for our *backwardneſſe*; how heavily doe we come off (for the moſt part) in works of this kind? *Mercy* is by our Saviour preferred before *kindneſſe*: Sayes he, when thou makeſt a Feaſt, bid the poore, &c. doe not bid the rich; a man may bid his rich friends in a way of *kindneſſe*, but (ſayes Chriſt) preferre the other before that, *mercy* before *kindneſſe*; mercy is better then kindneſſe. But now (my Brethren) is it ſo with us? doe we ſet *mercy* above *kindneſſe*? in way of kindneſſe and neighbourhood, you know what men will doe; a friend deſires you to goe a journey with him, you will goe; you will ſay, what though it coſt me *five pound*? what

Luke 14. 13.

if

if it be *ten pound?* what a matter is that betwixt friend and friend, neighbour and neighbour? When you meet together (ſometimes) in a Taverne, or at an Inne upon ſome occaſions in way of *kindneſſe*, to drink or feaſt together, then happy is that man that can be rid of his money firſt; I'le pay ſayes one; I'le pay ſayes the other; you ſhall not pay a penny ſayes the third, I'le beare all, &c. and now happy is the man that can be rid of his money *quickly*; it growes ſometimes very neer to a *quarrell*, becauſe we cannot be ſuffered to ſpend our money: Thus in works of *kindneſſe*. But now come to a work of *Mercy*, how is it then? is the money *then* upon the Table? is every man ready to throw downe *then*, and to lead the way unto other men in this caſe? Nay then, alas! I am in debt; then, my purſe is not about me; or elſe, when it comes to the opening of the purſe, every finger is a thumb, and it is ſuch a while before any thing will be got out, that it is very tedious and irkſome to a man to behold it: Then the queſtion is not, who ſhall be *firſt?* but, who ſhall be *laſt?* I'le ſee what my betters doe firſt, there are ſuch and ſuch, they are a great deale richer and better then my ſelfe, I will ſee what they doe; happy is the man here that can be *hindmoſt*: Oh! my Brethren, is not this a thing, think you, that ſhould humble us, that ſhould ſhame us? that we in way of *courteſie* to man ſhould be thus *free*, but when it comes to works of *mercy* for God, we ſhould be ſo *bound up*, that we cannot cheerfully, almoſt, part with any thing? this is one of the things we fault in our ſelves, this ſame *backwardneſſe* to workes of this kind.

But ſecondly, there is another thing, and that is *barrenneſſe* in works of mercy: If a man will but compare what is expended on *ſelfe*, and on the *publike*; what a vaſt difference will there appeare upon the very firſt view? If a man read his books, he ſhall find, *Item* ſo much beſtowed upon *Apparrell*, and ſo much beſtowed upon a *Feaſt*, and ſo much for *my ſelfe*, my *ſelf-credit*, and my *ſelf-delight* and *content*, my *ſelfe I know* not what, ſo much for *ſelfe*; there it amounts to ſcores, to *hundreds*, it may be, to *thouſands*: But then come on the other 2.

ſide

ſide; how much for *Gods Houſe?* how much for *Gods worſhip?* how much for charitable and for *merciſull uſes?* and then there come *two-penees* and *three-pences*, and poore ſhort reckonings, not worthy to be accounted and ſummed up almoſt: Is it not thus (I beſeech you) with many of us? are we not thus *barren* in works of mercy? and ſhould not this ſhame us now? I hope, my Brethren, I hope, that there are none of you but will beare me *company* in this work, even this night before you ſleep, betwixt God and your ſelves to confeſſe this your ſinne, your *nigardize* towards God, your *pinching* when it comes to a work of mercy and charity; whereas you can be *profuſe* and *prodigall* when it is to ſerve your ſelves, and your owne ends.

Uſe 2.

Motives.

But this is not all; we muſt not onely be *ſorry* for our *failing* this way, but we muſt labour to *reforme* and *amend* this now, to put on to this great work of charity and mercy that is underhand: I beſeech you, conſider, that we are *bound* to it as well as *Cornelius*; and that we are as *able* many of us to doe it, as that poore Captaine was: Conſider, how that we have as faire *promiſes* as ever he had, and that we have as faire *opportunities*: Opportunities, ſaid I? Nay, never more opportunities then in this day in which we live; I need not tell you; you cannot be ſtrangers to the miſeries of the Land, and of this City; I am but a ſtranger here my ſelfe, yet notwithſtanding, I ſee and know ſo much, that if you would be pleaſed, you (I meane) of the richer ſort, to *deſcend* and to *goe* into the houſes of many poore men (hundreds in ſome ſeverall Pariſhes) and there ſee how they *fare*, and how they *lodge*, I am perſwaded, you would be ſorry, that your *horſe*, that your *dog* ſhould feed and lye no better then ſome of them doe: And if you would yet goe farther, and look upon many men that *labour*, and labour *diligently*, early up, and late downe, that take *exceſſive paines* for to get their *bread*, you ſhould find that they be not able to afford ſo much *money* as would buy a little freſh *water* to make their children drink; yea, that they are ſo called upon by Wife and Children within, that they cannot endure the *houſe* almoſt; bread ſayes one, drink

'drink, ſayes the other; Father, where ſhal's have victuals, 'oh! I am ready to ſinke, I am ready to faint: It is the caſe of many *modeſt* men, *labouring* men, that toyle and take a great deale of paines, and are not able to maintaine themſelves and their Families with their labours, you would find it ſo upon ſearch made.

Shall I adde a third Inſtance? there are come to the City (certainly it is the *honour* of this City, and God will bleſſe the City for it, and you will all ſpeed the better for your receiving of them;) there are come to the City, I ſay, a company of *poore* people that are driven out of the Country; they lived, ſome of them, in good faſhion in their Country, able to relieve many poor (ſome of them able men that did bear *office* in the place where they lived;) men that ſtand ſo diſpoſed, that they had rather *halfe ſtarve*, then they would be *burthenſome* to you; ſuch there are about this Towne: Touching theſe I may ſay, that unleſſe God be mercifull to them, and the times doe mend and ſettle, and ſome courſe be taken, many of them will be more then halfe ſtarved. You, my Brethren, you here ſit *warme*, you here live in *plenty*, live in abundance, but my heart bleeds and dyes within me, to think of the miſery and deſolation that I have in part ſeen in ſome *parts* of the Country: I muſt tell you, that if ſo be the Lord be not pleaſed to find out ſome *way* of reliefe for many poore people in the Country, they will be utterly ſtarved and undone; they cannot expect many more *Harveſts* and crops of Corne: Well may they come up *hither* and eat up your *plenty*, but they will not be able to bring in any *ſupplies* to you, as formerly they have done: Oh! conſider, and ſay not now, men groane without a *cauſe*, and there is not *ſuch need* as men will pretend: No, certainly, certainly there is great need; for many men, they have lived as *long*, and ſhifted as long as they know how to live in an *honeſt* way; the Lord pitty them, and give you hearts to tender them to your power.

Well, but things *ſo ſtanding*, what ſhall I perſwade you to? two things, my Brethren.

The firſt is this; that you would labour to make your ſelves

able to doe somewhat: And then secondly, that you will travell with your selves, that you may be *willing* to doe for those that be *necessitous*, in misery and want.

1. *How able to doe works of mercy.*

For the first; some man will say, Alas, how can we help it *now?* how (can) we help it? *trade* failes us; our *burthens*, they are *heavy*, and *payments*, they are *multiplyed* upon us more and more; it is not with us as it hath been, we are not able to doe what we are willing to doe.

Well, I heare your answer, I beleeve it to be true in some *part*: But now I beseech you, good my brethren, let us *cast* about a little, and see whether we may not be in some measure *enabled* to doe for those that be in *greater* want then our *selves*. 1. Use your *hands*, you that are able to labour, labour and take paines, as *Paul* would have you, *Ephes. 4.* that so you may have somewhat to spare for those that are not able to labour or to take paines. 2. And use your *heads* too, set your *wits* awork this way, cast about and contrive as well as you can how the necessities of people may be supplied in some measure: Cast about, I say; is there no way to prevent these *idle vagrants*, and these persons that eat up the bread of the honest poore? Is there no way for to pull downe more of these *Play-houses*, I meane, *Tipling-houses*, Ale-houses, and the like; and to set up *Working-houses* that people may have labour, and that they may be set upon somewhat? is there no way for us to cast and contrive how people may be kept *alive*? I beseech you that are men of *wisdome* and understanding, that you will imploy your thoughts this way.

1.

Ephes. 4. 28.

2.

3. And then next; doe something by way of *abatement*, abate something, and abridge your selves a little, that you may be helpfull to others: Abate something from your *backs*, and something from your *bellies*, and something from your *delights* and *recreations*; be content a litile to deny your selves, (to deny your selves a *little*, I say) for the supply of others. I tell you, I am verely perswaded that there would be enough *saved* and *spared* from *needlesse* drinking, I meane, from *Wine*, and *Tobacco*, and *Strong-waters*, and the like; and from *trimmings*, & *laces* and *dresses*, and such like things as are *more* then

3.

necessary

neceſſary; enough ſpared, I ſay, to ſupply the neceſſities of many men that doe now ſtand in great need of very *neceſſaries*: Oh! let your Bread be a little *browner*, let your Tables be a little *ſhorter*, let your Coats be a little *plainer*, a little courſe, a little condeſcend to the wants of your poore brethren, and impart ſomething unto them that are diſtreſſed and naked.

You will ſay happily, that you muſt maintaine not onely Nature, but you muſt maintaine the *honour*, the *port*, and the *credit* of your places too. *Object.*

I anſwer, it is true, you muſt, (I'le not preſſe you now with that which ſome *Caſuiſts* ſay touching this point in caſe of *extremity*, and of *meere* neceſſity, how farre forth a man muſt deny himſelfe that way; we will not ſtand upon that now) we will yeeld you that; and there will be a *competency*, I hope, without any ſuch extremity: We doe not preſſe you that you ſhould any way deny your *ſelves* any thing that is fit for *nature*, that is fit for your *places*, and for your *relations*: onely I propound and offer this, whether when theſe are anſwered and ſatisfied *competently*, whether then there will not be ſome *overplus*? and if ſo, then I preſſe the point: Will you not deny your ſelves in a *ſuperfluity*? abate a *little* for Chriſt? a little *finiſhneſſe*, and a little *exceſſe* and ſuperfluity? What? not abate a *little* from a *dog*, from a *bird*, from a *beaſt*? Will you not doe thus much for *Chriſt*? Chriſt bated of Heaven (as it were) for the time, he was content to lay aſide his *glorious Robes* in our miſery, aud in our *beggery*: Oh! let Chriſt be ſo much beholding to you, that you lay ſomething out of the *overplus for him* and *for his ſake*: And when you doe what you are able to doe, it is accepted; as the Apoſtle ſaith, *It is accepted according to that that a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. Thus you muſt labour to be able to doe works of mercy. *Anſw.*

But then there is a ſecond thing; and that is, when you are *able*, you muſt be *willing* and *ready* to doe it too; you muſt be willing to it, I ſay; and here God beares us downe with a world of *Arguments*. 1. If we look to *God*, he is our friend, nay 2. *How willing to doe them.* 1.

our Father; you know, for a *friend* you will doe ſomewhat; if a *friend* come to you, and ſay, here is ſuch a poore friend and *Kinſman* of mine in want, for my *ſake* doe ſomewhat, I'le doe as much for a friend of yours; will you not do it? and will you
2. doe it for a friend? and will you not doe it *for a God?* Conſider *Chriſt*; Chriſt comes in his fleſh to you, when poore Chriſtians come to you; he preſents a *pale face*, a *thin cheeke*, he preſents a *bare arme* or *leg* (it may be) to you; will you not doe ſomewhat for to ſupport *Chriſt*, and to cloath Chriſt in his *members*, & in his ſervants? ſhall the *bones* of Chriſt ſtare and ſtand out? ſhall the naked *fleſh* and skin of Chriſt *pine*
3. away for want of ſuccour? 3. Adde to this: *Chriſtians* themſelves that come unto you; alas! they are your *fleſh*, as the Prophet ſayes, *Iſa.* 58. they are your owne fleſh: What? ſhall the *head* doe nothing for the *foot?* and ſhall the *hand* and the eyes do nothing for the *legs?* what? not for its *owne fleſh*,
4. and for thoſe that be of the ſame *body*? 4. But laſtly, conſider *your ſelves*, and have reſpect to your ſelves (if you regard none of the former,) and provide for *your ſelves*, labour to place your wealth ſafely, to *ſecure* it firſt, and then to *improve* it next.

For the *ſecuring* of it, put it into a *ſure* hand; you know, men in theſe doubtfull and dangerous times caſt about where they may ſafely place their Treaſure and their Goods; ſome ſend it to a Garriſon, and ſome (happily) paſſe it over the Seas into another Country. But tell me now, I beſeech you, is there any place ſo ſafe as *Heaven*, where no *thiefe* comes, where no *plunderer* comes, where no *ruſt* comes? is there any place like that? or can you put it into a better and ſafer hand then into the *hand of God* himſelfe? labour to lay it where you may be ſure to have it forth-comming, put it into Gods hand.

Nay, *improve* your eſtates this way: you are willing to doe that, I hope, *ſow*, that you may reap, ſo the Apoſtle cals works
2 Cor. 9. of mercy: It is a *ſowing*; it is good *husbandry* for a man to ſow, it payes him for his paines to ſow; what you give in works of mercy, you ſhall reap for the ſame a greater Crop, and a

greater

greater harveſt. Nay, what ſayes *Solomon? Prov.* 19. 17. he that gives to the poore, *lends* to the Lord, and the Lord will *repay* him againe. I beſeech you, mark that place: You *give* to a man, but God takes it not as a *gift*, he takes it as a *debt*; 'tis your gift, 'tis Gods debt; and he becomes the *debtor* and the *ſurety* for the poore man; you give to man, but you lend it to God, and God is at leaſt debtor to *himſelfe* and his owne truth.

Yea, but when ſhall I have it againe? ſayes he there, God will *(certainly)* repay it, God will *(fully* and *abundantly)* repay it, no man ſhall loſe by God. My Brethren, take Gods word once, take him for your *ſurety*, and lend to him; he hath pawned his Honour and his Credit upon it, that you ſhall be repaid, firſt or laſt. Labour to *improve* your eſtates this way; yea, labour to *ſettle* ſomething upon *Poſterity*, put it into Gods hand: We will put (ſometimes) a Portion into a friends hand for a child; truſt God with it, he never dyes, he never breaks, he ever lives; make him your *Executor*, God will then provide for yours: The righteous, he gives, and he diſtributes, and *his ſeed enjoyes the bleſſing:* Oh! lay up your eſtates with God, lend unto God, lend it upon this *Publike Faith*, as it were, upon Gods Faith, and God will not faile you, he will certainly repay you againe. Thus you ſhould labour to be willing unto this good work of mercy: Many reaſons more we might preſſe you withall: I'le onely mind you of that of our bleſſed Saviour, in *Acts* 20. where it is ſaid (it was a Proverb of his) that it is *a more bleſſed thing for to give, then it is to receive:* Doe not you think ſo? doe not you think your caſe better to be able to *relieve* others, rather then to be *relieved* by others? is it not in your eyes better and happier for you to have ſomewhat to *give*, then that you ſhould be *beholding* to other men? ſith it is a more bleſſed thing to give then to receive, be you more forward to *give* then modeſt men will be to *receive* gifts: Give cheerfully, bleſſe God that you have *ability* to give, and bleſſe God that you have *opportunity* to give, and a *heart* to give, and an affection to give, and make God a *ſharer* in your wealth, and in

In Piel. יְשַׁלֵּם

your plenty, and your ſelves *ſharers* in this bleſſedneſſe, *bleſſe* your ſelves, *bleſſe* your houſes, *bleſſe* your eſtates.

Object. Yea but, will ſome man ſay, a man may give indeed, give away all, if he will, that he hath; and then what ſhall become of *himſelfe* and *his*?

Anſw. The holy Ghoſt anſwers this; I referre you at your leiſure to one Scripture, in *Eccleſ.* 11. 1. and ſo forward; where the Wiſe man doth prevent all the Cavils and *Objections* that *fleſh and blood* is ready for to make againſt this work of mercy.

Eccleſ. 11. *opened, ſee in Part. Tirin. ad locum.*

1. Whereas a man would ſay, it is but *caſt* away all that is given, it is loſt and drowned (as it were) I ſhall never ſee it againe. No, ſayes *Solomon*, though it may ſeem to be a throwing downe the *ſtreame*; yet (ſayes he) caſt thy bread upon the waters, and thou ſhalt find it many dayes after; firſt or laſt it will returne, it is gone but a voyage, it will come back with a great *returne*, thou ſhalt find it againe many dayes after:

Object. And whereas a man would ſay, alas! there is no end of giving; there be ſo *many* poore that now want, that a man may *exhauſt* himſelfe ſooner then repaire and *ſatisfie* them:

Anſw. *Solomon* anſwers him; give (ſayes he) to *ſeven*, and give a portion alſo to *eight*; though they be *many*, proportion it accordingly; give to this man a little, and to that a little, that every body may have ſomething of a *little*.

Object. Yea, but I know not what *times* may come, and what I my ſelfe may be put to:

Anſw. *Solomon* anſwers him, Give (ſayes he) for thou knoweſt not what evill may be upon the earth, therefore give *while thou* haſt ſomewhat to give, becauſe thou knoweſt not how long thou ſhalt have it; therefore give, becauſe thou knoweſt not what thy ſelfe mayeſt come unto: Thou mayeſt need mercy, therefore *ſow* mercy, that in time of need thou mayeſt reap.

Qbject. Yea, but, will ſome man ſay; it is true, I ſhould pitty people, and ſo I doe with all my *heart*, I pitty them with my *ſoule*, but I am not able to help them, and to relieve them; I hope, the *heart* wlil be accepted:

Anſw. *Solomon* anſwers, If the Clouds be *full* of water they will drop down raine, that is certaine; if there be abundance of raine there, the Cloud will not keep it all to *it ſelfe*, it will *impart* it to the thirſty and hungry ground: So

muſt

muſt we doe: thou haſt mercy and charity in thy *heart*, and it pittles thy heart to ſee men in this miſery: Oh! remember, if there be water in the Clouds ſome of it will drop downe; if there be mercy in thy *heart*, there will be ſome in thy *hand* too.

Object. Yea, but will ſome men ſay yet further; if I were well ſeated & accommodated, then I could ſpare ſomewhat; but alas! I live in a corner, I live out of the way, I have no great *trading*, and it is not with me as it is with many others, I cannot give:

Anſw. *Solomon* anſwers you; whether the Tree (ſayes he) ſtands *ſouth*, or whether it ſtands *north*; in a more *fruitfull*, or in a more *barren* place, yet it is the *Lord's* Tree ſtill, *cadit Domino*, it fals to him, and it beares fruit to him, and ſo it will be with us too: If we be good Trees, let us live in the *north* or in the *ſouth*, in a *better* place, or in a *worſe* habitation, if ſo be we be *good*, ſomewhat will be comming, and we will yeeld ſome fruit; ſo *Solomon* tels us.

Object. Yea, this is true, if ſo be a man did know how it would be *accepted*; I could find in my heart (indeed) to give, but I know not *how* it will be taken; poore men are *captious*, and they will not take a little; and rich men will take exceptions: ſome will ſay, I doe it out of *pride* and ambition, and raiſe me (it may be) higher in the Subſidie book, becauſe I am ſo forward and free of my purſe, ſo that I know not what to doe:

Anſw. *Solomon* anſwers you; he that obſerves the wind and the raine ſhall never plow, never ſow; if a man will be ſtill *objecting*, he ſhall never goe on with any work or ſervice whatſoever.

Object. Yea, but I know not the *parties* to whom I give; there are many hypocrites and diſſemblers, that pretend a great deale of want when there is no ſuch matter: if I did *know* the men, it were another matter:

Anſw. *Solomon* anſwers; Neither doeſt thou *know* how the child growes in the womb of her that is with child, but for all that thou muſt not ſtarve the child; we muſt labour to doe that which is fit for us to doe; to follow our light, and our beſt *wiſdome* and diſcretion, and when we have ſo done, leave the *reſt* to God, whoſe providence works (as it were) *under the ground* for us, as for the *child*.

Object. Yea, but I find in *experience* that I have been *cheated* and abuſed by fellowes heretofore, and that puts me off

Answ. off now, and discourages me: *Solomon* answers thee; in the *morning* sow thy seed (sayes he) and in the *night* let not thy hand slack; thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that; or whether both shall be alike; therefore cast not perils, but venture it (as it were) *venture* it sometimes, when thou hast nothing to the contrary, thou *knowest not* but it may succeed very well; howsoever, what thou doest in *uprightnesse*, and with thy *best discretion*, that God will accept, and that God will take in good part: Thus *Solomon*, you see, does wipe off those Objections that flesh, and blood, and unbeliefe is apt to make. I could (if it were needfull now) adde more which are answered sufficiently by many, specially by two of the Fathers, which *professedly* writ upon this Argument; the one is *Cyprian*, and the other is *Basil*, and I must referre Schollers unto them: I should now adde some *rules* for your better working, as touching the *ground and order* of your giving; you must 1. give your *selves* to God, as *Paul* saith; 2. for matter, give your *owne*, whence Almes tearmed often *righteousnesse* by the Hebrewes and the 70. 3. for *time*, doe it quickly whilst you live, and men live, and not (as *later* Jewes doe) give for the dead, But of these and other rules I have spoken *elsewhere*, and you may read *every* where: and therefore I here conclude this Point. And now we have done with the two *Acts* of *Cornelius*; we heare what he was in point of *Prayer*, we heare what he was in point of *Almes* too: I perceive the time hath deceived me, and therefore I will but touch upon the third point: I crave your patience so long.

Rules in giving.
2 Cor. 8. 5.

See their Mazkir, remembrance of souls, &c.

We have spoken of the things selves; here is yet something that would be said of the *Person*, that is, *Cornelius*; he was a *Gentile*, and (as it should seem) none of the best of the Gentiles neither, an *Italian*, his *Name*, his *Band*, and his *Host* speak that way somewhat.

This *Cornelius* was also a *Souldier*, and amongst Souldiers an *Officer*; and yet notwithstanding, you see, that he was a *praying* man, a very *godly*, a very devout, a very *mercifull* man.

The

The thing that hence we had thought to have obſerved, is this:

That there is no *outward* diſadvantages that can *excuſe* us from Gods *ſervice*, or *exempt* us from Gods *acceptance*; we will put in both: He *ſerved* God, and he is *accepted* of God, notwithſtanding his *Country* and his *diſadvantages*; ſo that let a mans *Country* be what it will, let his *calling* be what it will, let his *condition* be what it will, if he *ſerves* God, God will *accept* of him, and of his ſervices. We note this the rather, becauſe that *Peter* gives us the note in the 34. verſe of this Chapter; I perceive indeed (ſayes he) that God is no reſpecter of perſons, but in every Nation he that feares God, and works righteouſneſſe, is accepted of God, let him be what he will: but I dare not ſtand to proſecute this point. *Doct.*

All that we will now ſay for the Application of it, is thus much: *Uſe*

Firſt, it takes off that lazy excuſe that is made by many men; they would *ſerve* God, and they would pray, and they would doe much, that they would, but they are not accommodated accordingly: there be lets and hinderances in the way; the *Time* ſerves not, and the *Place* ſerves not, and their *Calling* ſerves not; thus many exceptions they have againſt the ſervice and the worſhip of God. *All* theſe may be anſwered with *one Cornelius*, beſides others, if time would have given leave. We ſee that *Noah* and ſome others, in the worſt *times*, could find time to ſerve God: We ſee that ſome in *Nero's houſe*, and ſo in the worſt *places*, have found place for to ſerve God: We ſee that ſome of thoſe *callings* that ſeeme to be fartheſt from Heaven and God, ſome of thoſe Callings have ſerved God: *Gaius*, it ſeems, was an *Innekeeper*, yet a faithfull man; *Cornelius* a Souldier and a *Commander*, and yet a godly and a religious man: So that there is no *place*, no *time*, no *calling* that can exempt us this way. 1.

But then ſecondly, we had thought to have ſaid ſomething of thoſe that pretend they would ſerve God, but they feare it would not be *accepted*: and why not accepted? Oh! their *perſons* are ſo meane and poore, and their *ſervices* are ſo weake 2.

and ſo contemptible, and their *ſinnes* ſo great and ſo enormious, that ſure God will not accept of them. It is anſwered, God is no reſpecter of perſons, in *every* Nation he is ready to heare every *poore* ſoule that ſeekes unto him, and calls upon him.

3. We ſhould (in the nexe place) have called upon you all, to doe what you *can* in your *families*, ſith that there is no man *excluded* from Gods *acceptance*, or Gods *ſervice*; therefore have reſpect to your ſervants, even to the very *Kitchin-boy*; have reſpect to all that are within your compaſſe, and within your ſelves, doe what you can to reclaime them from ſin, to bring them up in the knowledge and information of God: What knoweſt thou (ſayes the Apoſtle) beleeving man, but thou mayſt convert thy unbeleeving wife? So ſay I to you, what know you but that God may have pitty upon thy poore *ſlave*, thy poore *apprentice*, as well as upon thy ſelfe? Yea, what know you, but if you make a good *choyce*, and take a good *courſe*, and carry a good *hand* over them, but that *Souldiers* and thoſe that lye in Garriſons, and repaire to your *Forts*, may be godly men, religious men, as *Cornelius* was?

And for your ſelves, let me call upon *every* man this day, to haſten to Gods ſervice: You have all the *advantages* that may be; you live in a Land of *uprightneſſe*, in a Goſhen of light; you are under a *Conſtellation* (as it were) of ableſt *Magiſtrates*, and of ableſt *Miniſters*; who ſhall ſerve God, if you will not, that have all theſe helps, and theſe advantages? Therefore, art thou called to repentance? Never ſay, I *cannot*, I have *no leiſure*, and the like; thou mayſt have leiſure and grace, God is able to break the hardeſt heart, he is able to melt the frozeneſt heart, and to ſubdue the ſturdieſt ſpirit; and therefore ſay not, thou canſt not: Are you called to duty and ſervice? Say not, I would pray, and I would heare, and I would doe many duties to God, but I cannot, I have not leiſure, I have no *time*, my *place* will not beare it, my *occaſions* will not ſuffer it: Thou mightſt if thou hadſt a heart; other men in the ſame circumſtances, in as great difficulties, have

ſerved

ſerved God, and waited upon him: *Daniel* was a man *full* of *State-buſineſſe*, yet he finds his time for praying every day to God more then once or twice: Here is a Souldier in the Text, he can feare God, he can look after his Family, and he can reſtraine his Souldiers from pilfering, and plundering, and drinking, and ſwearing, he can doe it by Gods bleſſing upon his endeavours; and if he, why not others too? therefore doe not make any ſuch lazy plea: Much leſſe ſay, Oh, it will not be *accepted!* it will be accepted: Give but what thou canſt give, God will accept it; pray but as thou canſt pray, God will accept it; repent as thou art *able* to repent, and call in Gods help and aſſiſtance, God will accept it: What ſhall I ſay more to you? I am cut off, I am afraid to be too-to tedious to you: And therefore I conclude abruptly; onely I have propounded unto you *one* Example and *Patterne* of mercy, preſented unto you many *Objects* of mercy, and of compaſſion; now let me preſent unto you ſome more, and theſe are knowne well to your ſelves: Here is a true report, &c.

Here, according to the cuſtome, a Catalogue was read of ſundry Benefactors to the ſeverall Hoſpitals, and ſuch like Houſes for charitable uſes; and that done, the concluſion was as followes:

Thus you ſee (Beloved) here is work enough for your charity to be imployed about; here are many *Objects* of mercy, many *Arguments* of mercy; here are Objects of all ſorts: *Old* men and *Babes*, *Widowes* and *Orphans*, many *poore* perſons that want ſtocks to ſet them on work, that would faine be imployed if they knew how: Here are alſo divers others that cry to you, that call upon you for mercy, and for reliefe: The Arguments you have heard; Arguments from *God*; Arguments from *Chriſt*; Arguments from *your ſelves*; Arguments from the *times*; Arguments from your *Brethren*; Let me ſay all at once, God *requires* it, God *cals* for it, God *commands* it: God *commanded* once the Clouds, and they gave bread; God once *commanded* the Rocks, and they gave wa-

ter; God once *commanded* a Raven for to carry meat to a Prophet, and the Raven did it: Oh! for Christs sake, let us not shew our selves more *ravenous* then the Raven, more *rockie* then Rocks themselves; and thus we leave our errand with you; another Theme I confesse would better have liked me, and perhaps more reached you, but I have answered your desire in my choyce, and, I confesse, the Subject is not unseasonable; the Lord goe with it.

FINIS.

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JOSEPH CARYL.